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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sHB 6591

#### ***AN ACT REQUIRING THE EUTHANIZATION OF ANY CAT OR DOG TO BE PERFORMED BY A LICENSED VETERINARIAN.***

#### **SUMMARY:**

With certain exceptions, this bill requires that the euthanization of dogs or cats be performed only by licensed veterinarians in a humane manner. The bill subjects violators to up to a year in prison, up to a \$1,000 fine, or both.

The bill does not apply to the euthanization of (1) farm animals or livestock or (2) cats or dogs by law enforcement officers in the course of their duties. It also does not limit the euthanization of a cat or dog that is attacking a person or another animal (not just a dog or cat), if under the circumstances a reasonable person would consider the attack to threaten the life of, or likely cause serious injury to, the person or animal.

Under the bill it is a defense to prosecution if a person euthanized a dog or cat with a life-threatening injury to prevent the animal's further suffering.

The bill does not define euthanization.

Current law allows Connecticut Humane Society agents or officers, even if they are not licensed veterinarians, to humanely destroy animals under certain conditions (see BACKGROUND). Because the bill specifies that it applies regardless of other provisions of law, it presumably prohibits humane society agents or officers who are not veterinarians from euthanizing dogs or cats unless one of the bill's exceptions applies (e.g., the dog is attacking a person as specified above).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**BACKGROUND*****Connecticut Humane Society's Authority to Euthanize Animals***

Existing law provides that the euthanization of animals by the Connecticut Humane Society in accordance with state and federal drug laws is not deemed to be the practice of veterinary medicine (CGS § 20-197). Existing law also specifically allows Connecticut Humane Society officers or agents to humanely destroy animals in their charge under certain circumstances. For example, they may humanely destroy such an animal that was lost, abandoned, strayed, homeless, or unsuitable for adoption, if the owner has not claimed the animal after five days. They can do so before then under certain conditions if the animal is injured or diseased (CGS § 29-108g).

They may also humanely destroy an animal that had been neglected or cruelly treated if a veterinarian determines that the animal is so injured or diseased that it should be destroyed immediately (CGS § 29-108e).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    28    Nay   0    (04/05/2013)